

<b>POLICE/SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT</b>		<b>GENERAL ORDERS</b>	
<b>SUBJECT: Hazardous Materials</b>		<b>NUMBER: 2-24</b>	
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2001</b>		<b>REVIEW DATE:</b>	
<b>AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: GO 2-24, June 1999</b>		<b>APPROVED: _____ Chief of Police/Sheriff</b>	
<b>CALEA STANDARDS: 46.1.2, 61.2.2, 61.2.3</b>		<b>VLEPSC STANDARDS: OPR.05.01, OPR.05.06, OPR.05.07</b>	

## **NOTE**

This order is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third-party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

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## **INDEX WORDS**

Accidents  
Contamination  
Evacuations  
Hazardous materials

## **I. POLICY**

Hazardous materials are occasionally transported through the agency's jurisdiction. The possibility, therefore, of an accident involving a vehicle carrying hazardous substances is a reality. The extent of damage from an accident involving toxic or otherwise dangerous substances depends on the response of emergency personnel and their ability to correctly identify and handle such incidents. The agency expects officers to be competent in basic skills and abilities necessary to identify the presence of hazardous materials and perform "first responder" services. The agency does **not** expect officers to exercise duties or responsibilities beyond the first-responder stage.

## **II. PURPOSE**

To establish procedures for the initial response and investigation of accidents involving vehicles carrying hazardous materials.

## **III. DEFINITIONS**

A. Contamination

The direct or indirect contact between officers and a hazardous substance. Officers shall consider contamination to be an injury which could result in illness or death.

B. Exposure

The concurrent presence of law-enforcement officers and hazardous materials under uncontrolled circumstances. Exposure may result in injury, illness or death.

1. Officers shall treat exposure as contamination even though no symptoms are evident. Known contamination requires medical attention and monitoring.

C. Hazardous material

Any solid, liquid, or gas which by its nature can cause injury, illness, death, property damage, or environmental degradation. **Radiological material** meets this definition except that it contains radioactive elements.

#### IV. PROCEDURES

A. General

Because of the hazard which might exist or may develop through an accident, especially a derailment or overturned vehicle transporting hazardous materials, officers must exercise extreme caution. Therefore, officers shall take the following actions.

1. At the scene of any incident or accident where hazardous materials may have been exposed, officers shall request dispatch to summon the fire department which shall assume authority and responsibility for emergency procedures.
  - a. Officers shall advise dispatch as soon as possible of the exact location of the hazardous materials incident and safe approach routes for emergency vehicles.
  - b. Officers shall rescue injured persons at the hazardous materials site **only if** they are properly equipped. Officers shall not unduly risk contamination.
2. If officers discover any evidence of leaking liquid or vapor, they shall assume that an exposure has occurred with possible contamination of people or facilities and shall:
  - a. Seal off the area until positive identification can be made by the fire department.

- b. Summon back-up units to establish a perimeter, setting up roadblocks or barricades as appropriate.
  - c. Evacuate the area and detain people as necessary.
    - (1) If the nature of the hazardous materials does not permit approaching the scene, keep **at least 300 feet away** and keep bystanders **at least 1500 feet away**.
    - (2) If the hazardous materials incident involves radiological materials, keep **at least 2000 feet away**.
3. Supervisors shall summon back-up units to establish a perimeter, as necessary, or order evacuation or detention of people. Supervisors shall instruct personnel to avoid **any** contact with liquids or fumes, to eliminate **any** sources of ignition, and not to eat nor drink near the scene. The on-scene supervisor shall construct a command post, if appropriate. The on-scene supervisor shall advise dispatch to notify appropriate command and county/town personnel, as necessary. The dispatcher shall contact key agencies, as specified in the county/town emergency plan *[give reference here]*, relaying the following information:
- a. Location of incident or accident.
  - b. Nature and type of hazardous material involved.
  - c. Shipper (if known) of hazardous material.
  - d. Nature of environment (business district, rural area, etc.).
  - e. Size of container and estimated amount of material discharged or leaked.
  - f. Location of hazardous material car (if a train), counted from the head of the train, car number, and description.
  - g. The serial number of any aircraft, if involved.
4. Approach the accident scene upwind if possible. If radiological materials are involved, **do not** approach. Await fire department personnel or HAZMAT teams who have special monitoring equipment.
- a. Note that communicable disease protective equipment, leather gloves, or chemical agent gas masks provide **no** protection from hazardous materials.

- b. Note that personnel may not be able to recognize hazardous materials immediately, although they are present. Some hazardous gasses are invisible and odorless.
- 5. The chief/sheriff shall notify immediately the county/town manger of the situation and shall keep him advised of any changes.
  - a. ***[In this section, refer to any mutual aid agreements that would be invoked because of a hazardous materials disaster. Cite the aid agreement by name, list cooperating agencies specifically and their duties, and cite any applicable law.]***
- 6. Normal accident investigation procedures shall be suspended until the on-scene authority has given appropriate clearance whereupon the accident shall be investigated and reported as provided in GO 2-20.

B. Identification of hazardous materials

Identification of hazardous material by the carrier may be accomplished by the following.

1. Placards

Placards are displayed at the front, rear, and on both sides of all vehicles (including rail cars) hauling hazardous materials; however, experience has shown that placards are sometimes either not displayed or have misidentified the cargo. Some placards are made of paper which may have burned before the officer's arrival. When on duty, each patrol officer shall carry a departmental brochure identifying placards in use.

- a. Red placards indicate flammable materials.
- b. Rust placards indicate explosive materials.
- c. White placards indicate poisonous materials.
- d. White/black placards indicate corrosive materials.

2. Driver

When the accident involves a truck, the driver may be able to supply information about the load transported; however, the driver is not required to know a great deal about cargo or emergency measures for handling it except for explosives. In case of explosives, the driver is required to have in

possession and be familiar with documents containing procedures to be followed in the event of accident or delay.

3. Shipping papers

- a. Where the hazardous material is transported by truck, the driver is required to have a copy of the shipping papers which show the name of the materials, classification, and quantity. By using these papers and the Emergency Response Guide, the officer can identify the hazard associated with the material and ways of handling it. Officers shall record the name of the materials, classification information, and quantity.
- b. Where the hazardous material is transported by rail, the shipping papers will be located in the engine and will have attached to them instructions for handling all hazardous materials on the train. Additionally, a manifest is located in the engine listing each car on the train and its contents in order from the engine back. If the conductor is not available or incapacitated when emergency personnel arrive, officers shall obtain the manifest from the engine compartment. *[This paragraph revised 7-1-2001.]*

4. MSD Sheets

To supplement the placarding system, many shippers of chemicals provide the drivers with Materials Handling Safety and Data Sheets (MSD Sheets) (formerly Chem-cards) which provide emergency information. Although MSD sheets are subject only to voluntary use, the officer shall ask the driver for them. *[This paragraph revised 7-1-2001.]*

5. Each officer's vehicle is furnished with a copy of the U.S. Department of Transportation guidebook on hazardous materials which contains identifying information on chemical products, first-responder hazards, and specific countermeasures.

C. Evacuation

1. When the possibility of an evacuation of all residents or inhabitants of part or all of the county exists, the chief of police/sheriff shall consider:
  - a. Manpower requirements.
  - b. The method of notifying persons to be evacuated (i.e., door to door, PA system, use of local radio stations, etc.).
  - c. The size of area and number of people living there to be evacuated.

- d. Area maps.
  - e. Use of mass transportation to move evacuated persons.
  - f. Housing of evacuated persons, where possible, in public schools.
  - g. Security of evacuated areas to prevent looting, and premature return (the fire chief shall make the decision when it is appropriate for people to return home).
2. The on-duty supervisor shall consult with the fire chief and the HAZMAT coordinator on any decision to evacuate an area. The supervisor shall effect the evacuation upon order of the fire chief. In the event of evacuation, the supervisor shall establish a command post, ensuring that the following tasks are undertaken. *[This paragraph revised 7-1-2001.]*
- a. Establish an emergency communications link with appropriate authorities.
  - b. Evaluate the size of the area and number of people to be evacuated.
  - c. Assign personnel to notify people through use of a PA system or door-to-door contact.
  - d. Notify the news media.
  - e. Arrange for mass transportation.
  - f. Arrange for temporary housing of evacuees.
  - g. Arrange for security of evacuated areas.

D. Key contact agency information requirements

The key contact agencies and persons are available for evaluation and assistance in the handling of hazardous material incidents and evacuation. Every effort shall be made to obtain the following information before contacting these agencies:

- 1. Location of the accident.
- 2. Hazardous material involved and shipper, if known.
- 3. The color and number of any labels on the carrier or cargo.
- 4. Type of environment (residential, rural, business, etc.).

5. Size of the container and amount of product leaking.
6. If rail, location of hazardous material car from the head of the train, car number, and description of car (i.e., tank car, box car, etc.).
7. The initial and number of aircraft, if any.

E. Post-incident responsibilities

1. All supervisors involved in the incident shall prepare and submit after-action reports to the chief/sheriff concerning all law enforcement activities including:
  - a. The cause of the incident and all tasks undertaken to control the incident;
  - b. The number of enforcement and emergency services personnel involved in the incident;
  - c. The number of deaths and injuries resulting from the incident and cost in damaged property;
  - d. Cost of manpower and equipment used to control the incident;
  - e. Comments on the usefulness of emergency plans and policies and recommendations for updating or revising plans and policies.
2. The chief/sheriff shall submit a comprehensive after-action report to the county/city administrator. The after-action report shall address any budgetary impact, commitments, or obligations. *[Section IV.E added 7-1-2001.]*

E. Key Agencies

Depending on the hazardous materials involved, one or more of the following agencies shall be contacted:

1. Chemical Transportation Emergency Center (CHEMTREC), 800-424-9300
2. Environmental Protection Agency's National Response Center, 800-424-8802
3. Virginia Department of Emergency Management, 804-674-2400, Richmond. (Use this number for radiological emergencies, toxic substances.) *[Revised 7-1-2001.]*

4. Etiological (disease-causing agents) agents: Department of Health, Office of Epidemiology, 804-786-6029, Richmond.
5. Hazardous chemicals: Department of Emergency Management, Richmond, 804-897-6500. ***[Revised 7-1-2001.]***
6. Virginia State Department of Emergency Management/HAZMAT team: 804-674-2400 ***[Revised 7-1-2001.]***
7. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, 804-786-2373, Richmond.
9. Water Control Board, Department of Environmental Quality, 804-698-4109. ***[Revised 7-1-2001.]***

***[Confirm agency names and telephone numbers: they change frequently.]***